

**VERTIGO**

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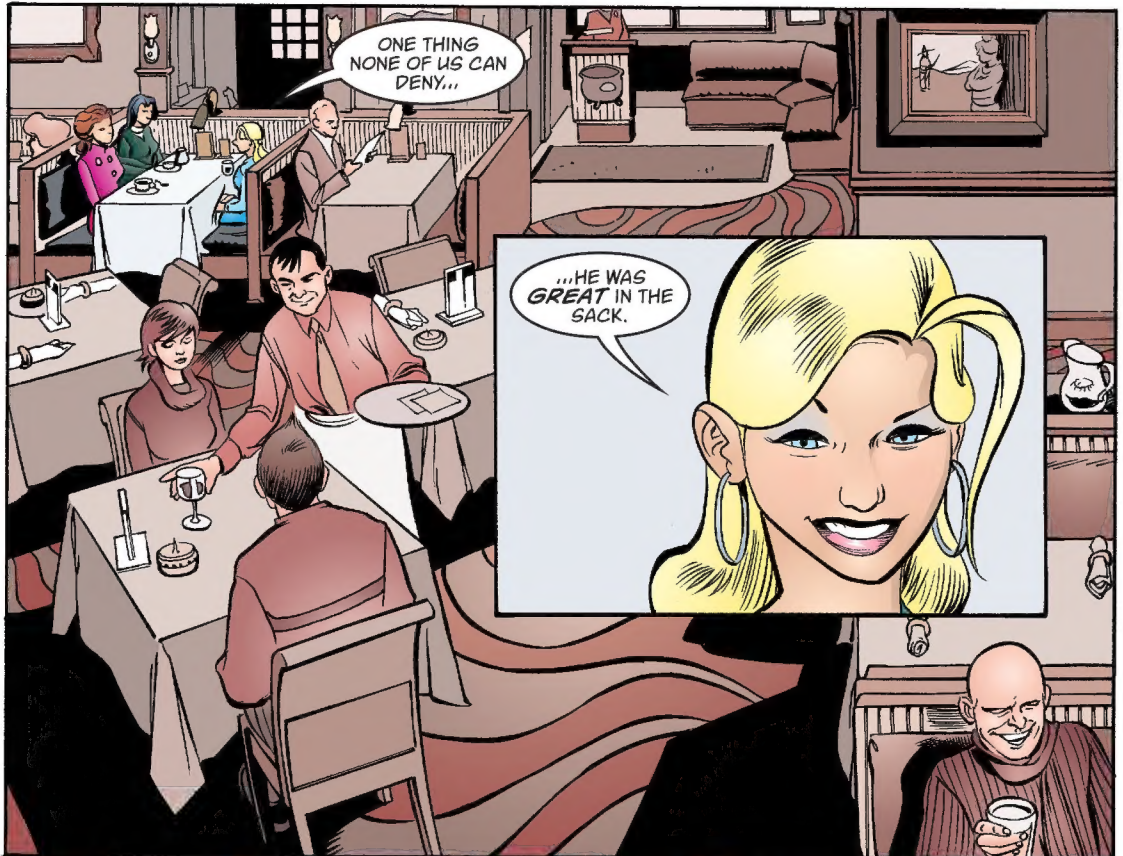
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# FABLES

*Cinderella Libertine*



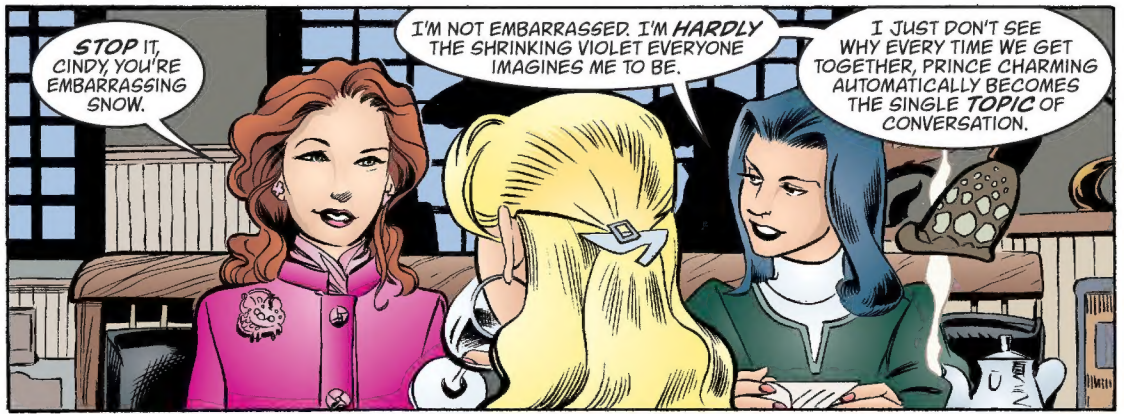


# Cinderella Libertine

*In which we explore something of the secret life of Prince Charming's rather outspoken and rambunctious third wife.*

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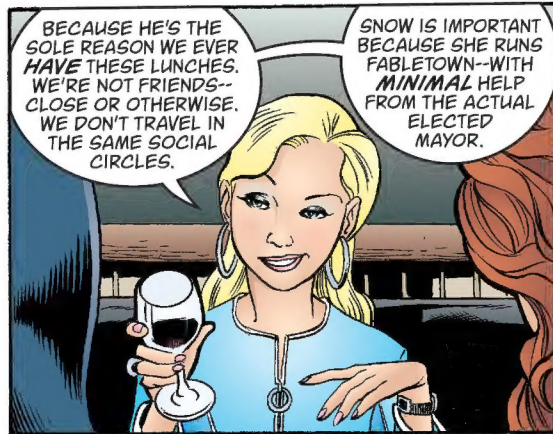




STOP IT, CINDY YOU'RE EMBARRASSING SNOW.

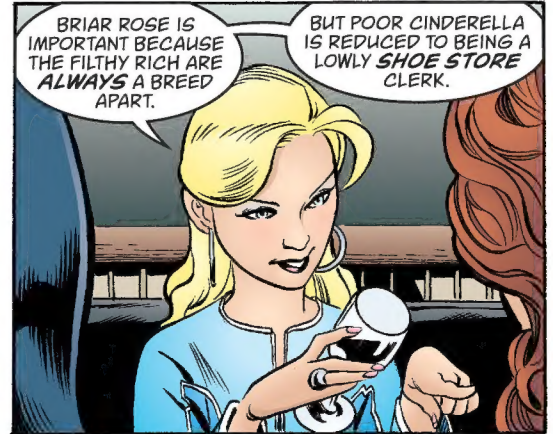
I'M NOT EMBARRASSED. I'M **HARDLY** THE SHRINKING VIOLET EVERYONE IMAGINES ME TO BE.

I JUST DON'T SEE WHY EVERY TIME WE GET TOGETHER, PRINCE CHARMING AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES THE SINGLE **TOPIC** OF CONVERSATION.



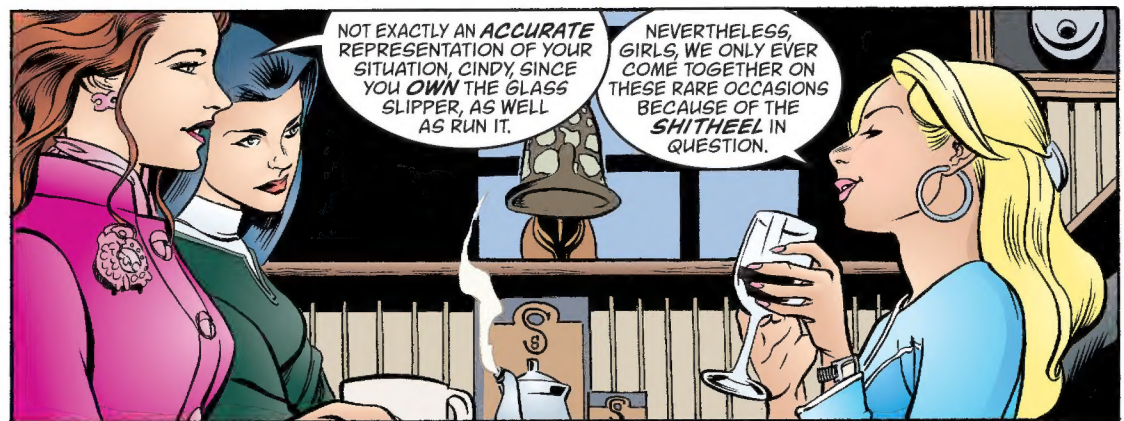
BECAUSE HE'S THE **SOLE** REASON WE EVER **HAVE** THESE LUNCHES. WE'RE NOT FRIENDS--CLOSE OR OTHERWISE. WE DON'T TRAVEL IN THE SAME SOCIAL CIRCLES.

SNOW IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE SHE RUNS FABLETOWN--WITH **MINIMAL** HELP FROM THE ACTUAL ELECTED MAYOR.



BRIAR ROSE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE FILTHY RICH ARE **ALWAYS** A BREED APART.

BUT POOR CINDERELLA IS REDUCED TO BEING A **LOWLY** SHOE STORE CLERK.



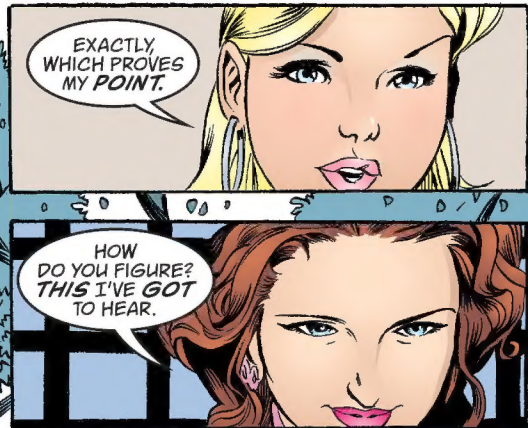
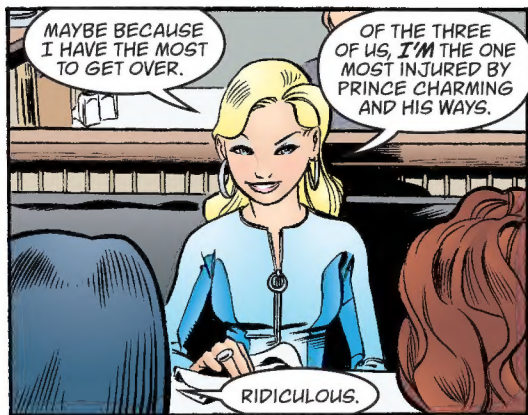
NOT EXACTLY AN **ACCURATE** REPRESENTATION OF YOUR SITUATION, CINDY, SINCE YOU **OWN** THE GLASS SLIPPER, AS WELL AS RUN IT.

NEVERTHELESS, GIRLS, WE ONLY EVER COME TOGETHER ON THESE RARE OCCASIONS BECAUSE OF THE **SHITHEEL** IN QUESTION.

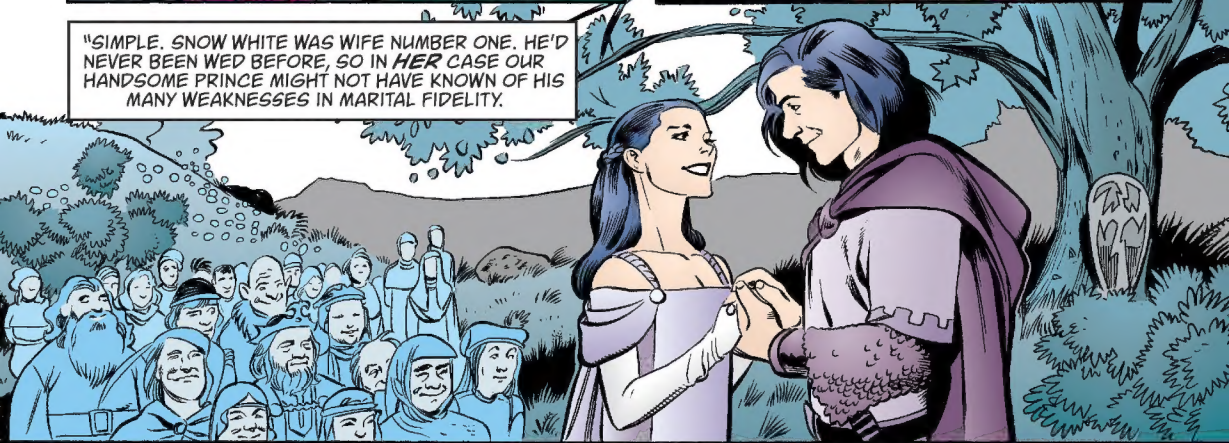


WE'RE LIKE AN ANNUAL MEETING OF HIS PAROLE BOARD, GETTING TOGETHER ONCE A YEAR TO CONFIRM THAT HE'S STILL AN UNREPENTANT **FUCK** AND **CONTINUES** TO BE DESERVING OF OUR ORGANIZED **CONTEMPT**.





"SIMPLE. SNOW WHITE WAS WIFE NUMBER ONE. HE'D NEVER BEEN WED BEFORE, SO IN **HER** CASE OUR HANDSOME PRINCE MIGHT NOT HAVE KNOWN OF HIS MANY WEAKNESSES IN MARITAL FIDELITY.

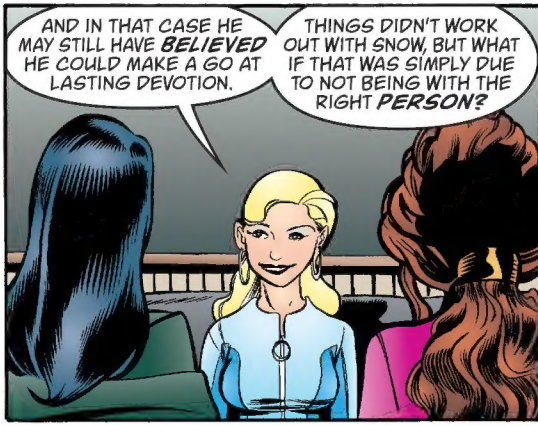


"THEN COMES BRIAR ROSE, OUR FAMOUS SLEEPING BEAUTY.

"WE KNOW HE WAS AUTHENTICALLY IN LOVE WITH YOU AT **FIRST**, OR HE NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WAKE YOU WITH HIS TRUE-LOVE'S KISS."

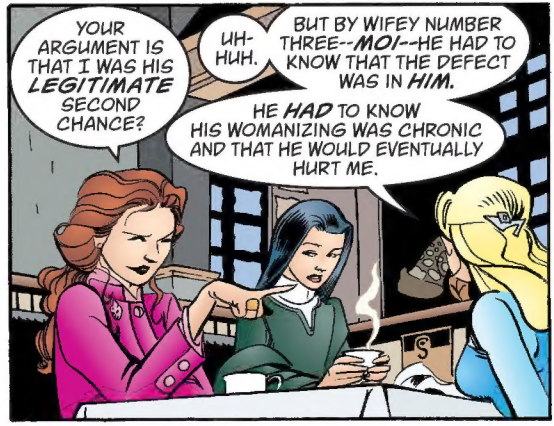






AND IN THAT CASE HE MAY STILL HAVE **BELIEVED** HE COULD MAKE A GO AT LASTING DEVOTION.

THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT WITH SNOW, BUT WHAT IF THAT WAS SIMPLY DUE TO NOT BEING WITH THE RIGHT **PERSON**?



YOUR ARGUMENT IS THAT I WAS HIS **LEGITIMATE SECOND CHANCE**?

UH-HUH.

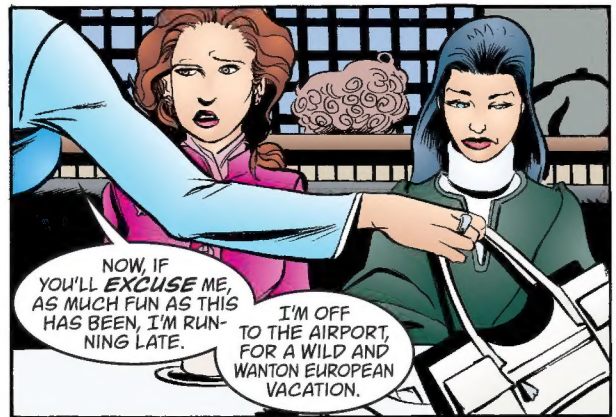
BUT BY WIFEY NUMBER THREE--**MOI**--HE HAD TO KNOW THAT THE DEFECT WAS IN **HIM**.

HE **HAD** TO KNOW HIS WOMANIZING WAS CHRONIC AND THAT HE WOULD EVENTUALLY HURT ME.



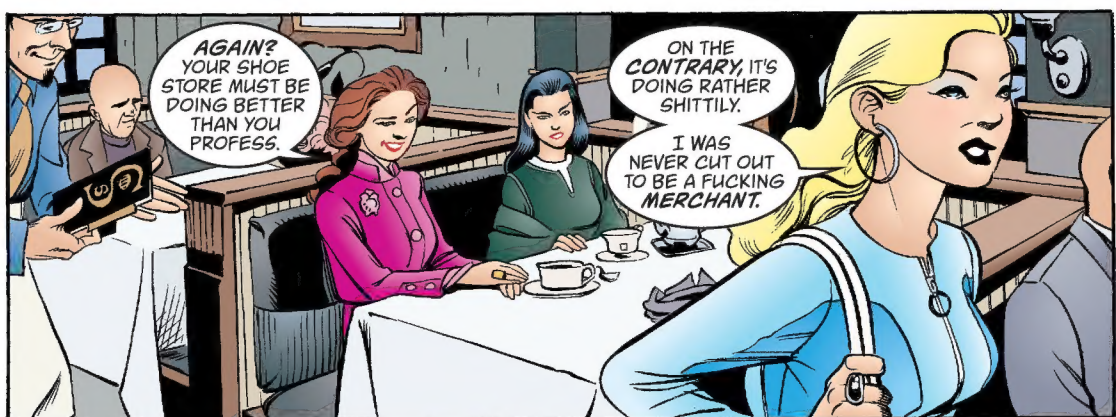
BY THE TIME IT WAS **MY** TURN, HE KNEW WELL IN ADVANCE HE'D **DESTROY** ME, AND YET HE JUST DIDN'T **GIVE** A FLYING FUCK.

Q.E.D., LADIES. I'M **DESERVEDLY BITTER** AND I PLAN TO STAY THAT WAY.



NOW, IF YOU'LL **EXCUSE** ME, AS MUCH FUN AS THIS HAS BEEN, I'M RUNNING LATE.

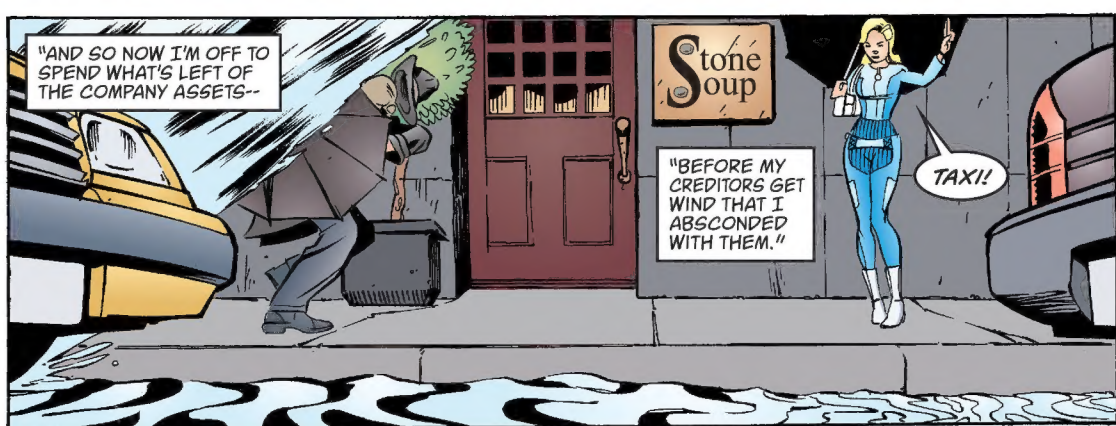
I'M OFF TO THE AIRPORT, FOR A WILD AND WANTON EUROPEAN VACATION.



AGAIN? YOUR SHOE STORE MUST BE DOING BETTER THAN YOU PROFESS.

ON THE **CONTRARY**, IT'S DOING RATHER SHITTILY.

I WAS NEVER CUT OUT TO BE A **FUCKING MERCHANT**.



"AND SO NOW I'M OFF TO SPEND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE COMPANY ASSETS--"

Stone Soup

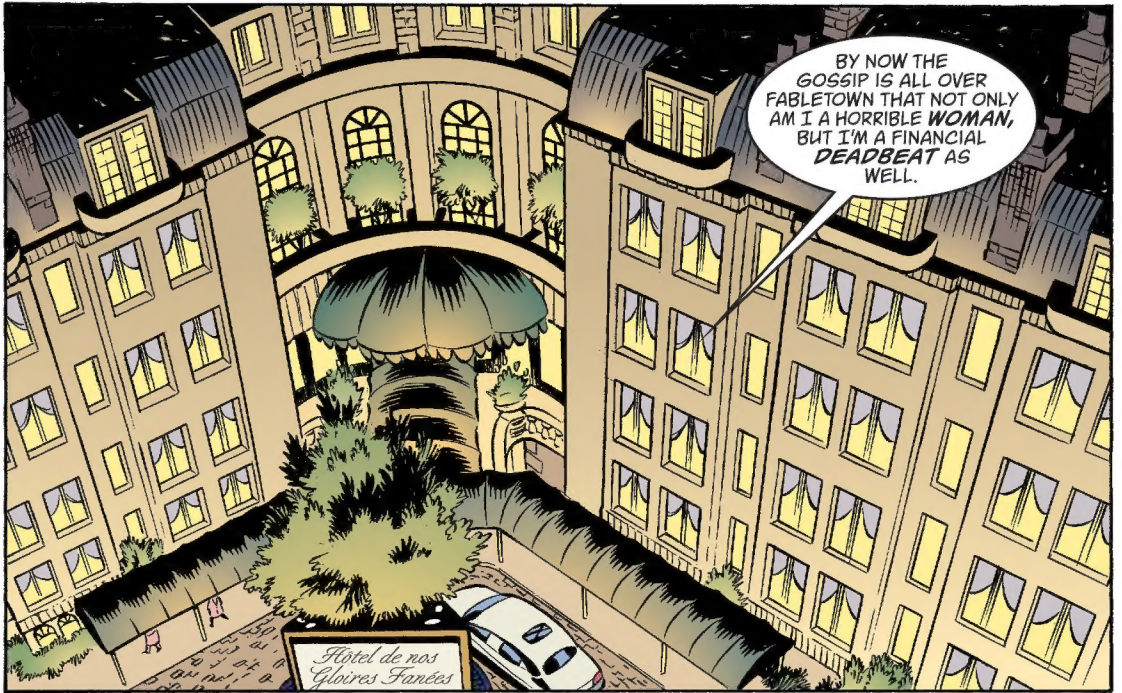
"BEFORE MY CREDITORS GET WIND THAT I ABSCONDING WITH THEM."

TAXI!!

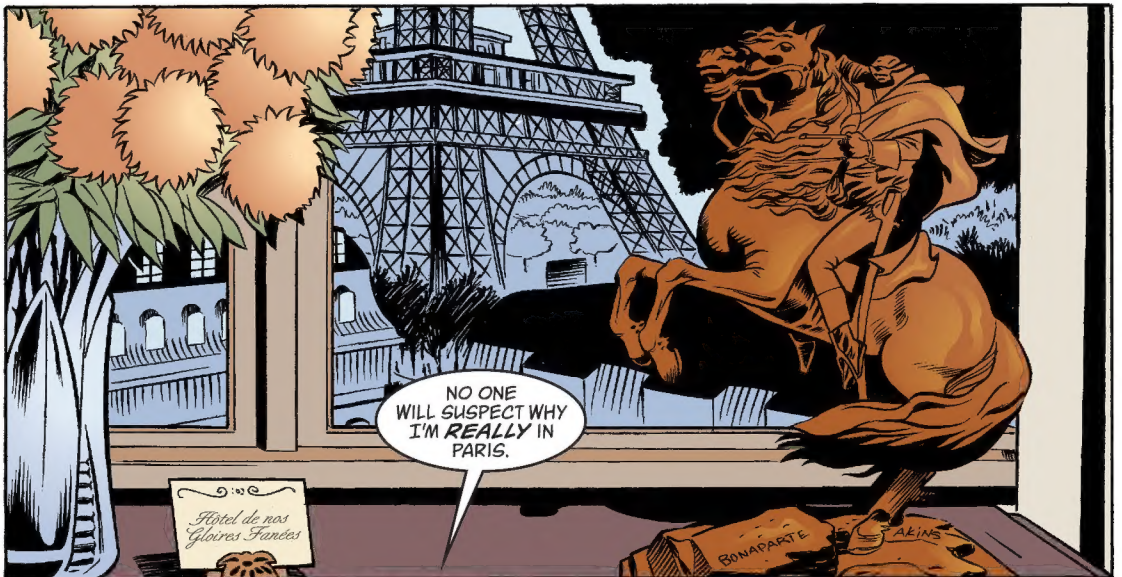




YES, SIR,  
THEY BOUGHT MY  
"ANGRY EX-WIFE" ACT,  
HOOK, LINE AND  
SINKER.

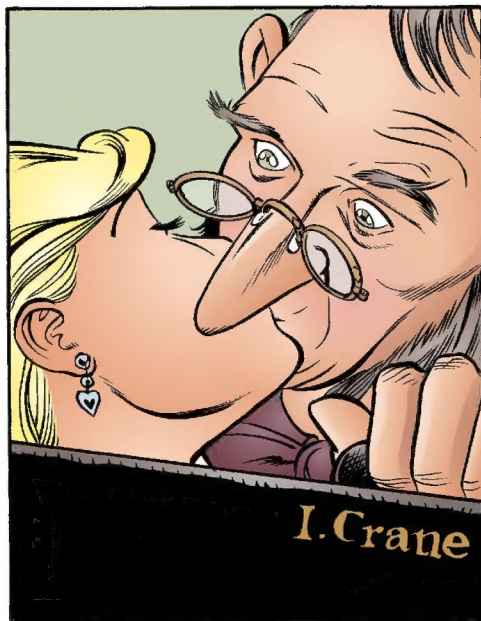
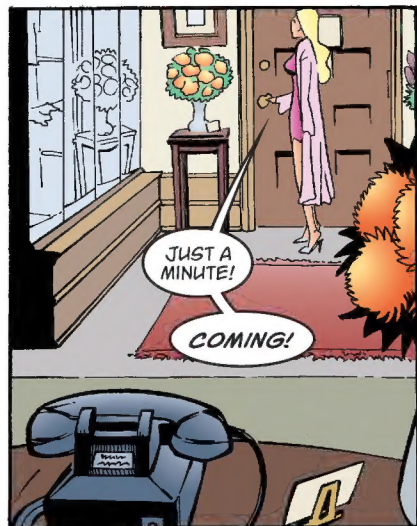
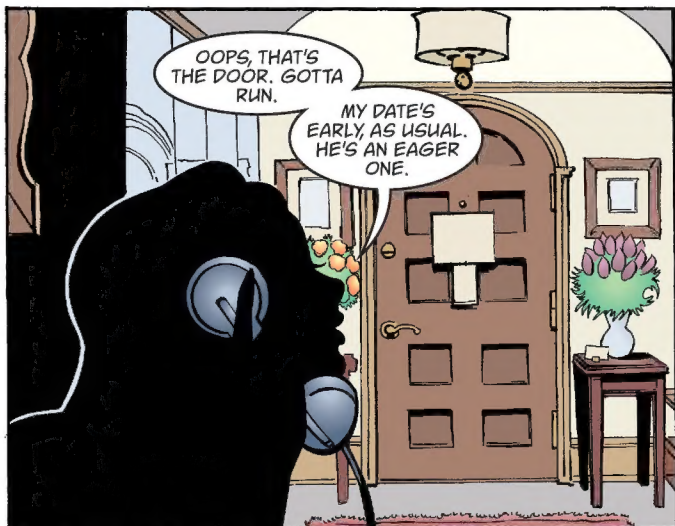
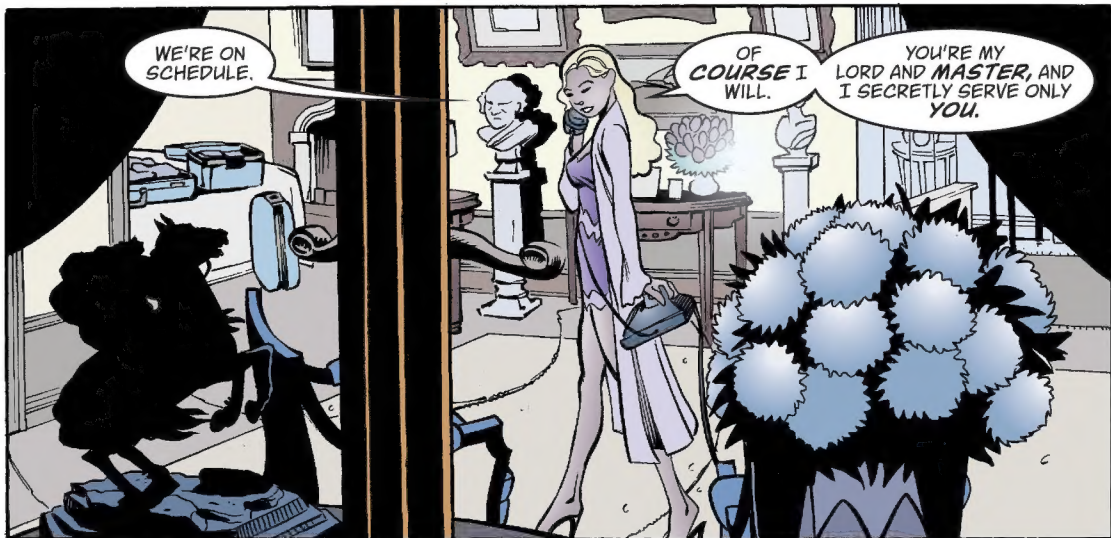


BY NOW THE  
GOSSIP IS ALL OVER  
FABLETOWN THAT NOT ONLY  
AM I A HORRIBLE WOMAN,  
BUT I'M A FINANCIAL  
DEADBEAT AS  
WELL.

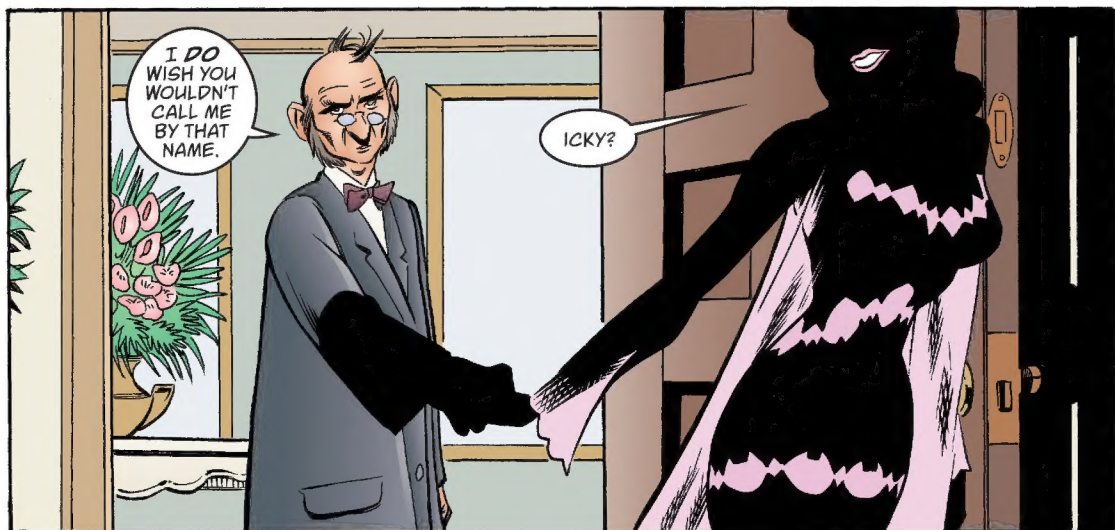


NO ONE  
WILL SUSPECT WHY  
I'M REALLY IN  
PARIS.



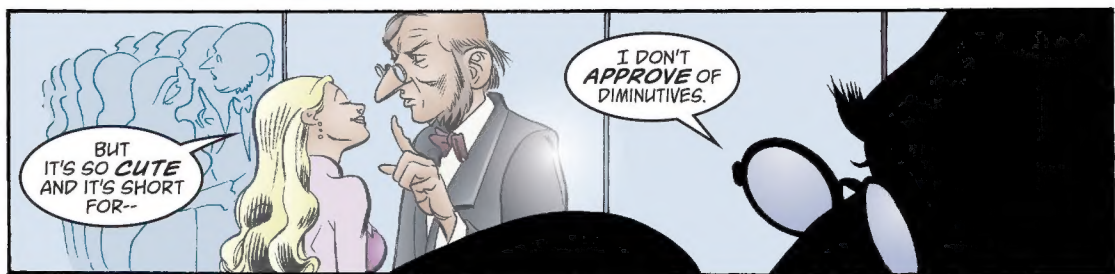






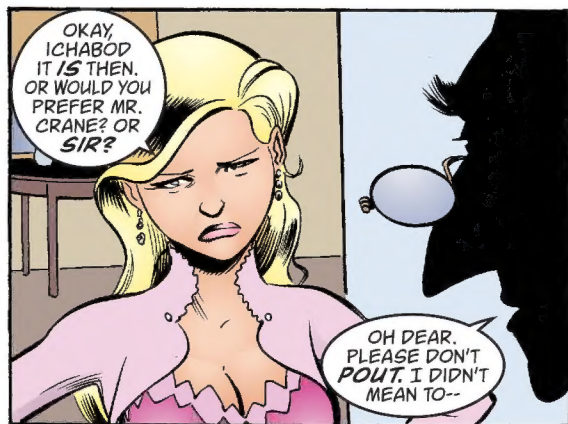
I DO WISH YOU WOULDN'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME.

ICKY?



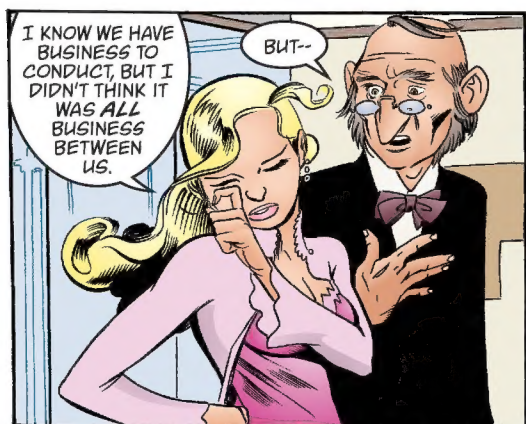
BUT IT'S SO CUTE AND IT'S SHORT FOR--

I DON'T APPROVE OF DIMINUTIVES.



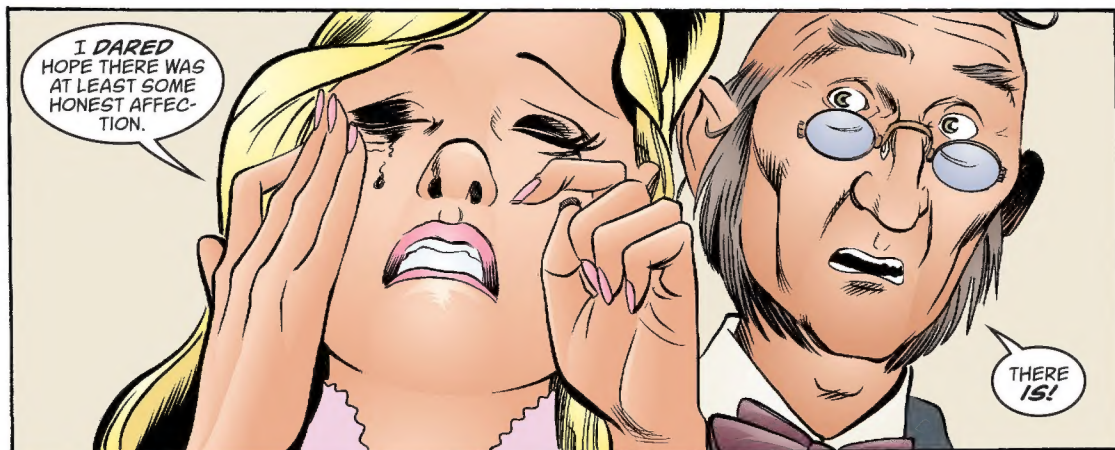
OKAY, ICHABOD IT IS THEN. OR WOULD YOU PREFER MR. CRANE? OR SIR?

OH DEAR. PLEASE DON'T POUT. I DIDN'T MEAN TO--



I KNOW WE HAVE BUSINESS TO CONDUCT, BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS ALL BUSINESS BETWEEN US.

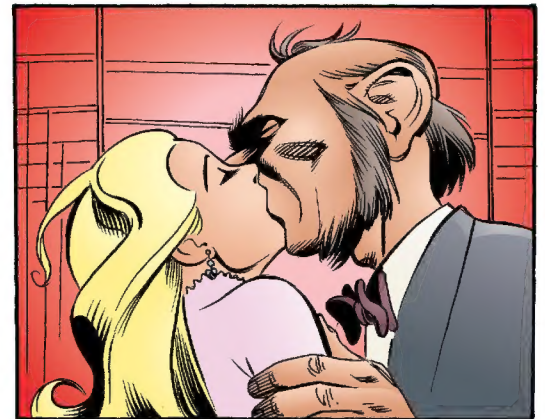
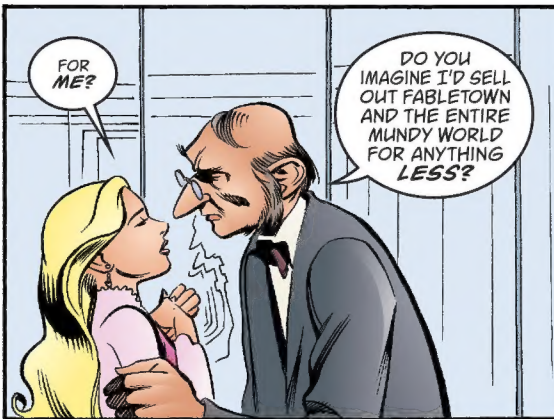
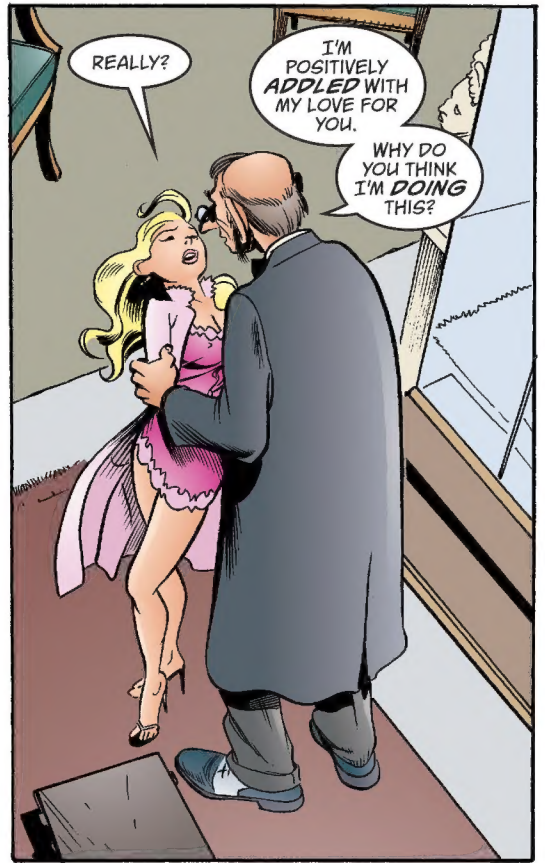
BUT--



I DARED HOPE THERE WAS AT LEAST SOME HONEST AFFECTION.

THERE IS!

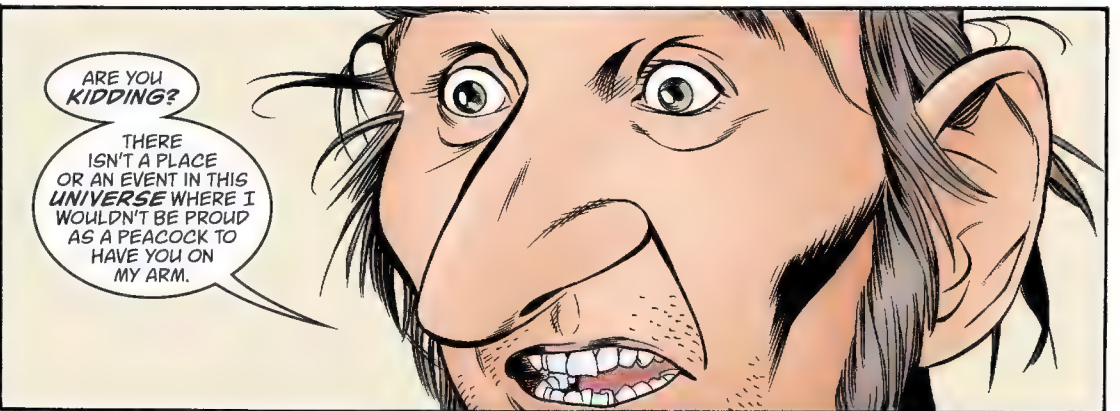
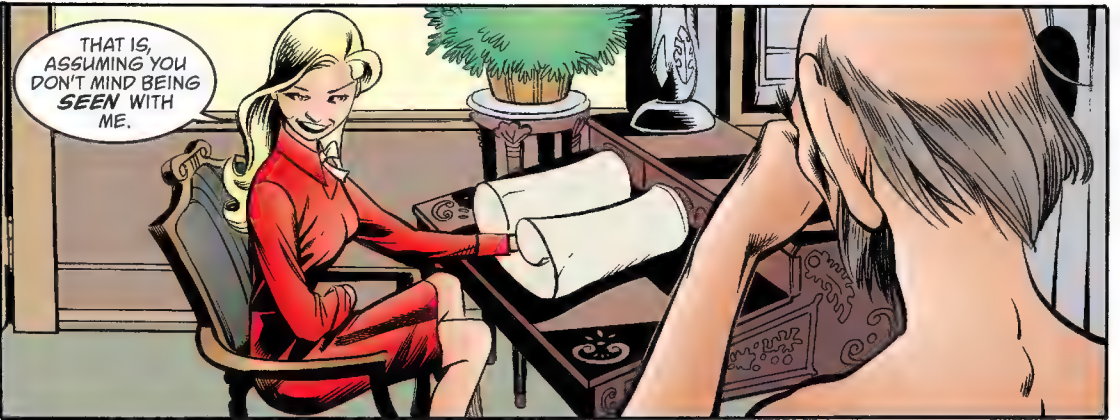
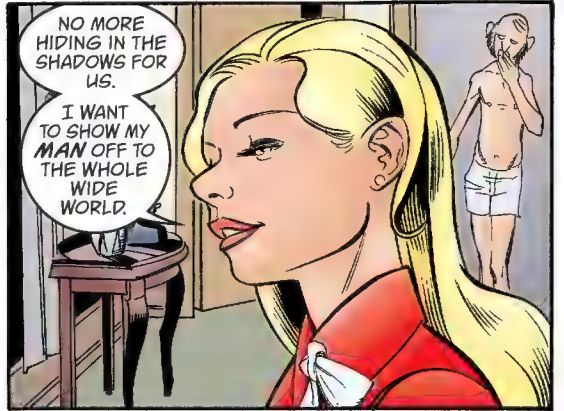
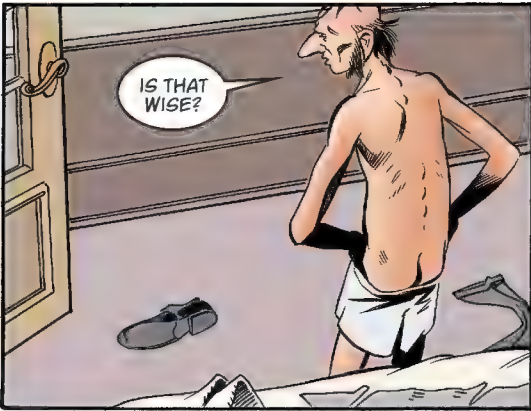
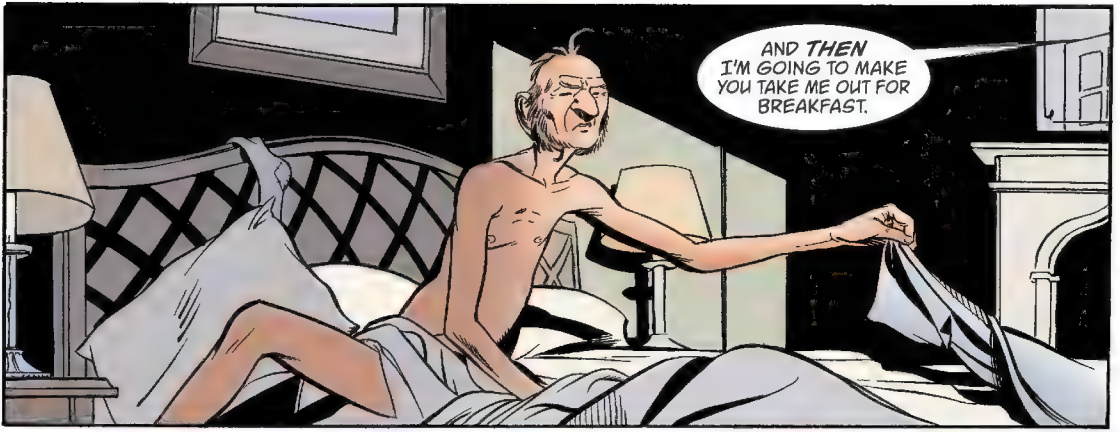




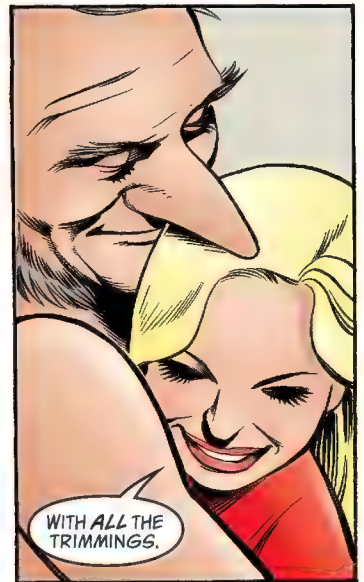
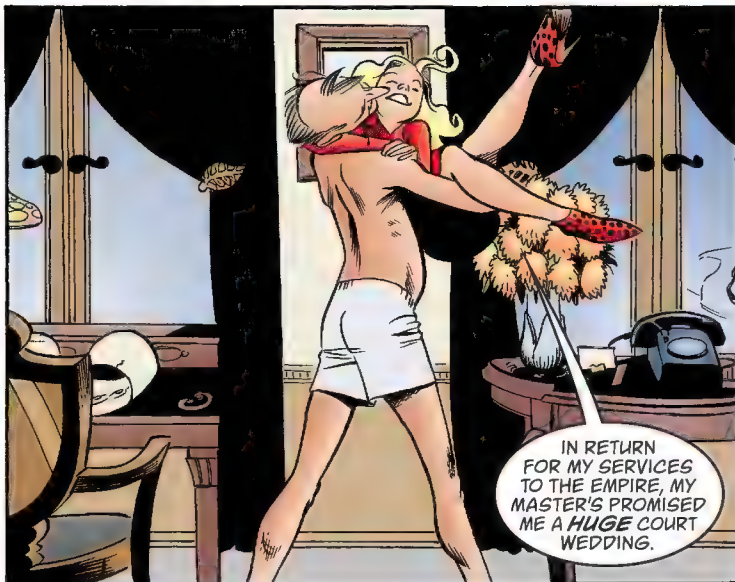
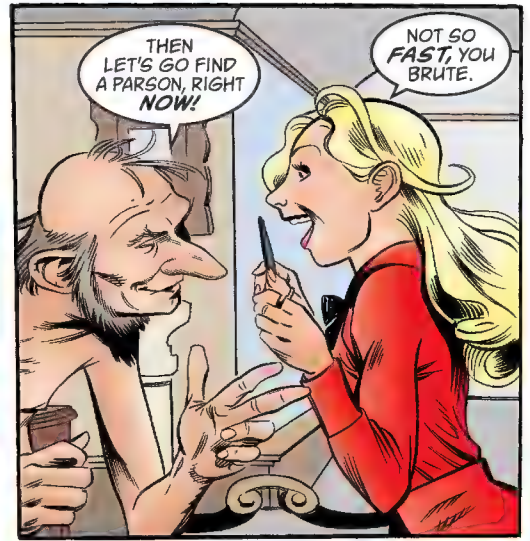
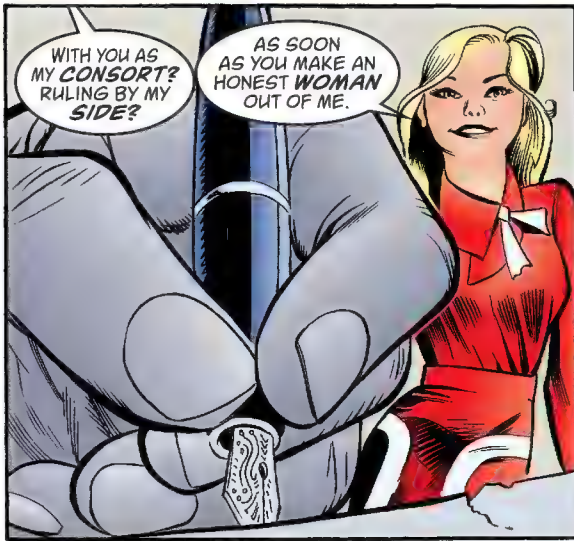
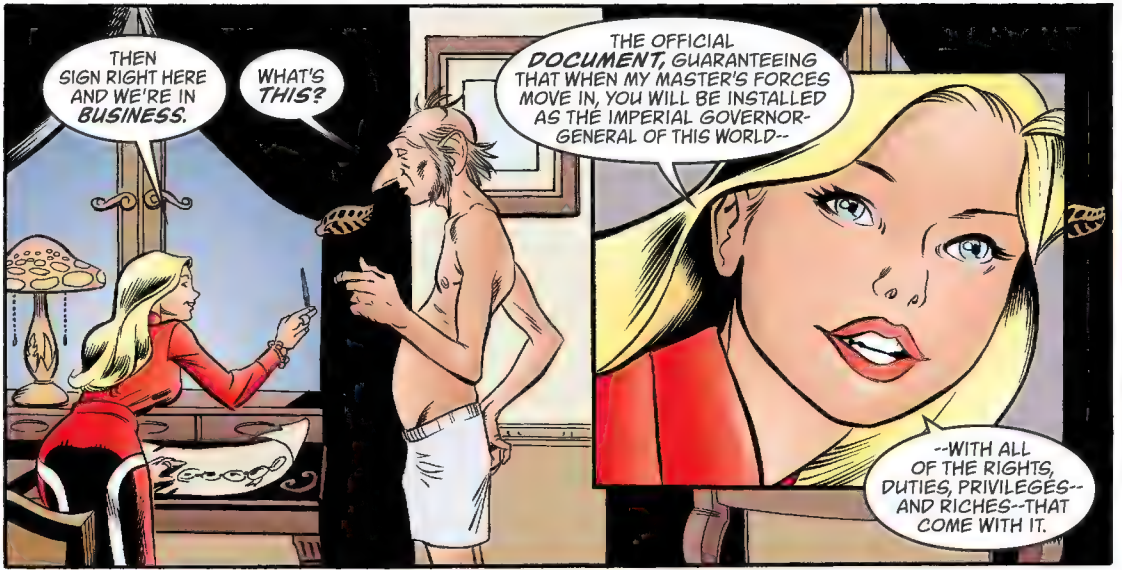




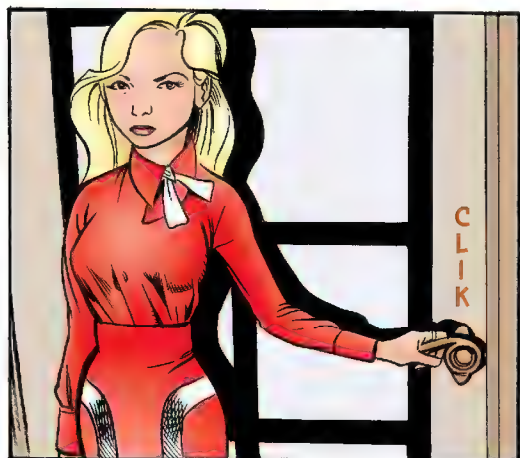
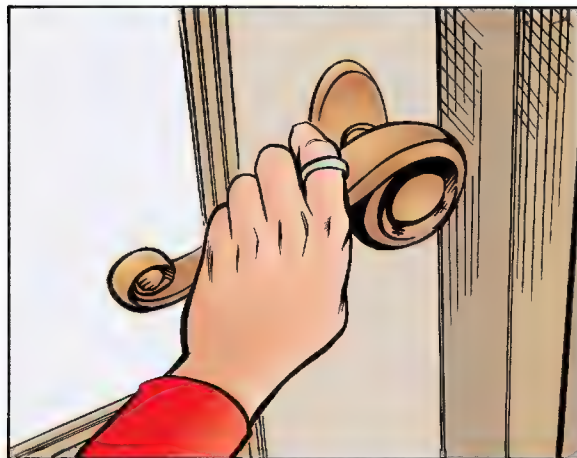
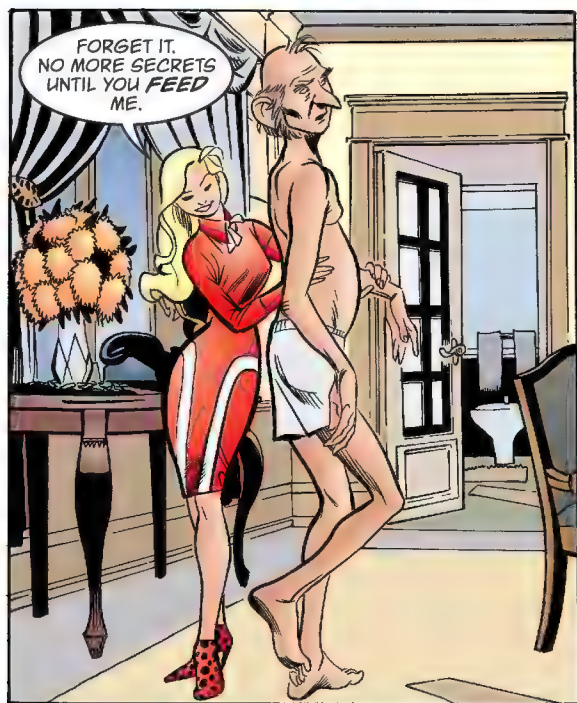
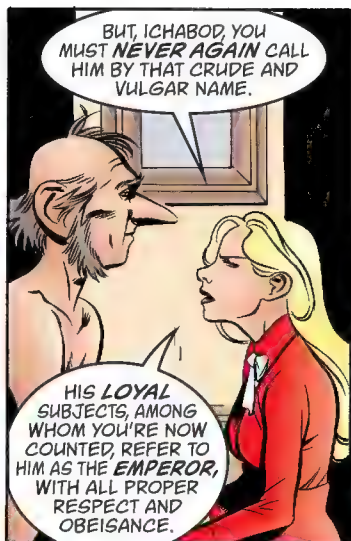




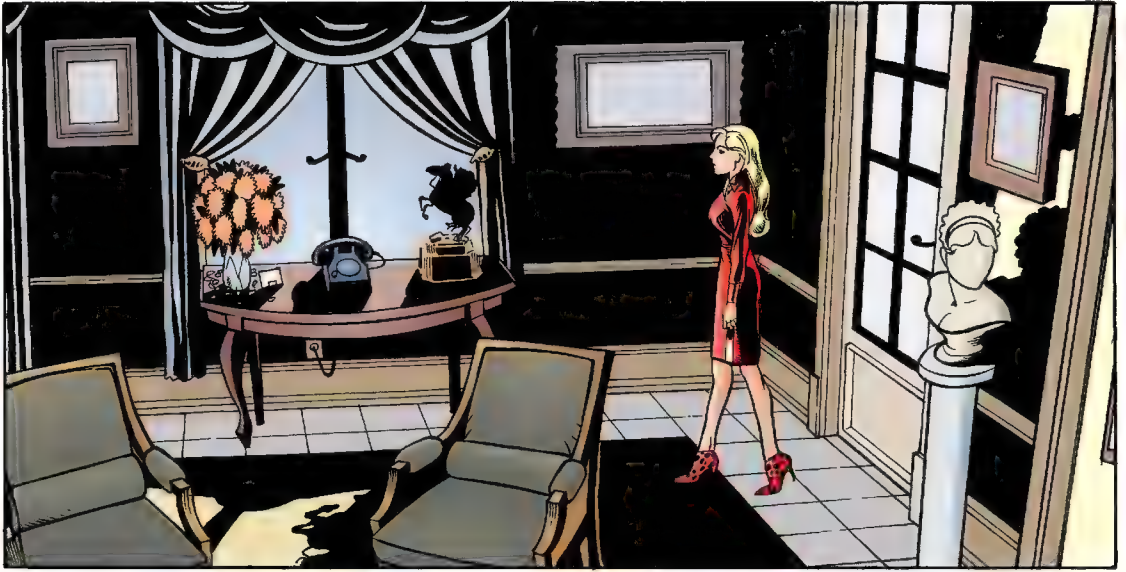














I RAN FABLETOWN, AS KING COLE'S DEPUTY, FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN YEARS.

SNOW WHITE WAS MY ASSISTANT THEN, JUST AS BOY BLUE IS HERS NOW.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? I REMEMBER THERE WAS SOME SORT OF SCANDAL, BUT THE PARTICULAR DETAILS ESCAPE ME.

ALL STUFF AND NONSENSE. SNOW WHITE MADE SOME... ACCUSATIONS.

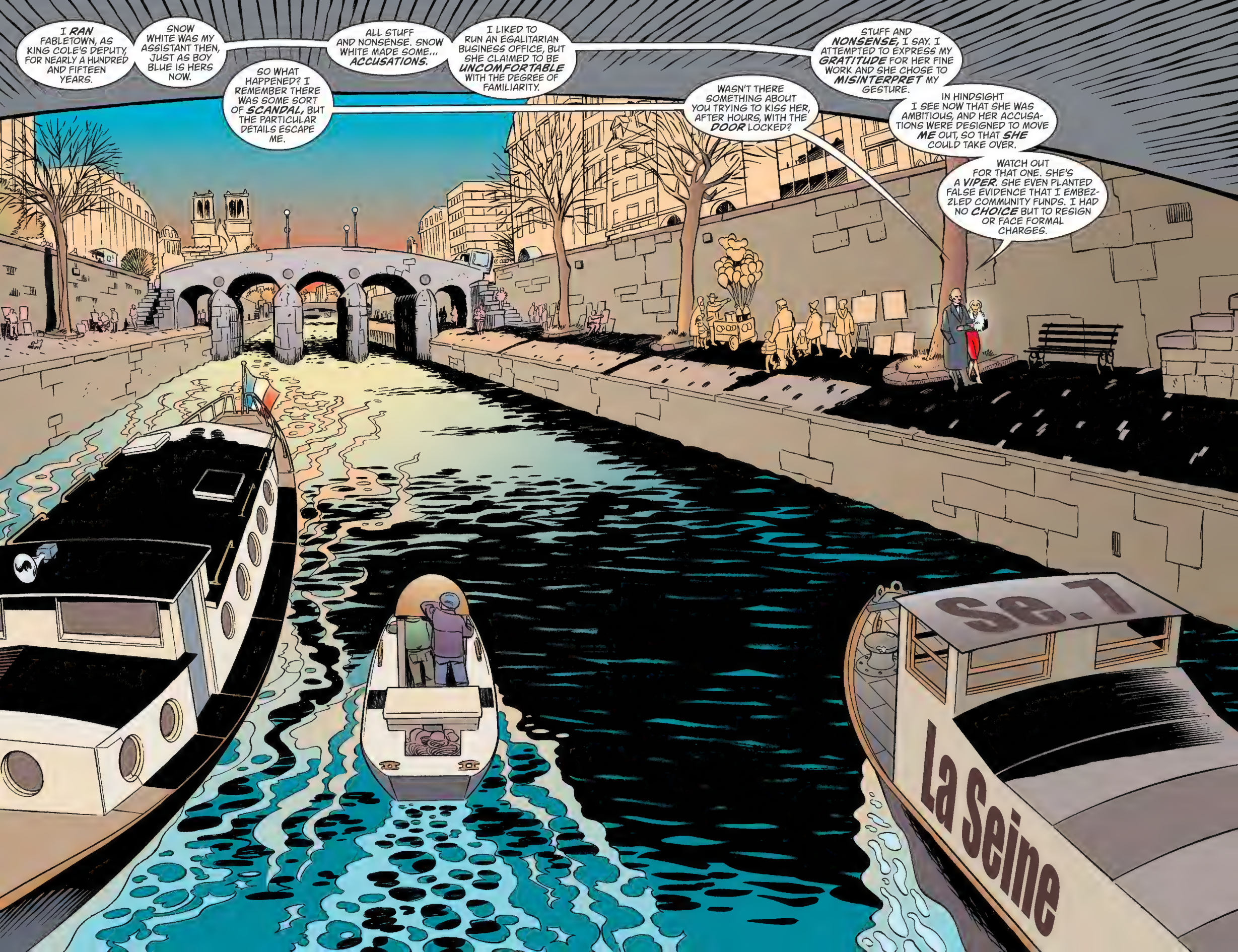
I LIKED TO RUN AN EGALITARIAN BUSINESS OFFICE, BUT SHE CLAIMED TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE DEGREE OF FAMILIARITY.

WASN'T THERE SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TRYING TO KISS HER, AFTER HOURS, WITH THE DOOR LOCKED?

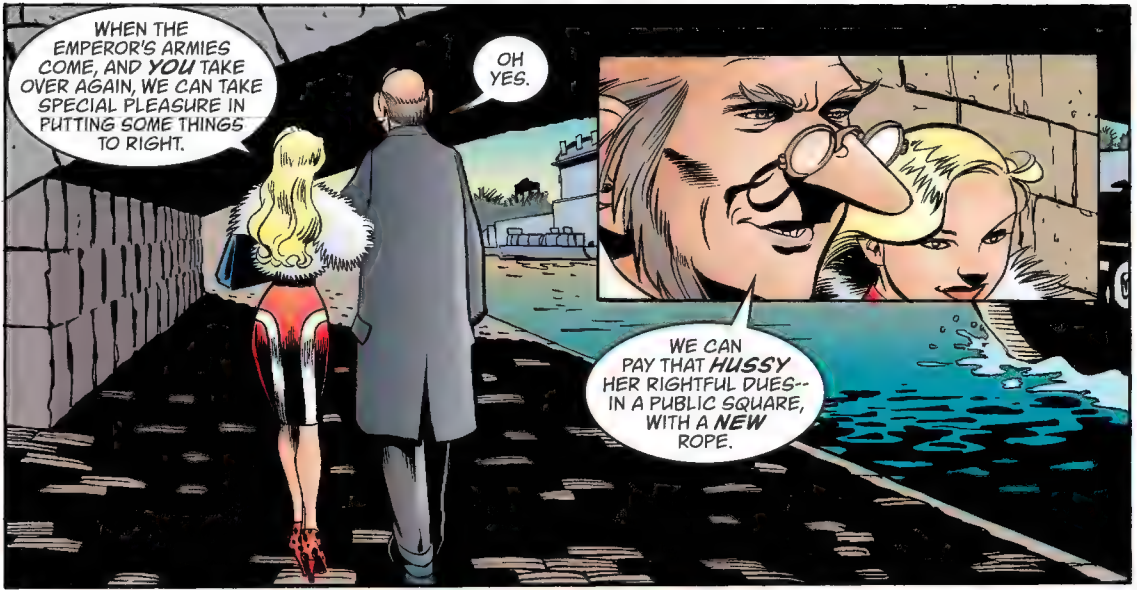
STUFF AND NONSENSE, I SAY. I ATTEMPTED TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR HER FINE WORK AND SHE CHOSE TO MISINTERPRET MY GESTURE.

IN HINDSIGHT I SEE NOW THAT SHE WAS AMBITIOUS, AND HER ACCUSATIONS WERE DESIGNED TO MOVE ME OUT, SO THAT SHE COULD TAKE OVER.

WATCH OUT FOR THAT ONE. SHE'S A VIPER. SHE EVEN PLANTED FALSE EVIDENCE THAT I EMBEZZLED COMMUNITY FUNDS. I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RESIGN OR FACE FORMAL CHARGES.



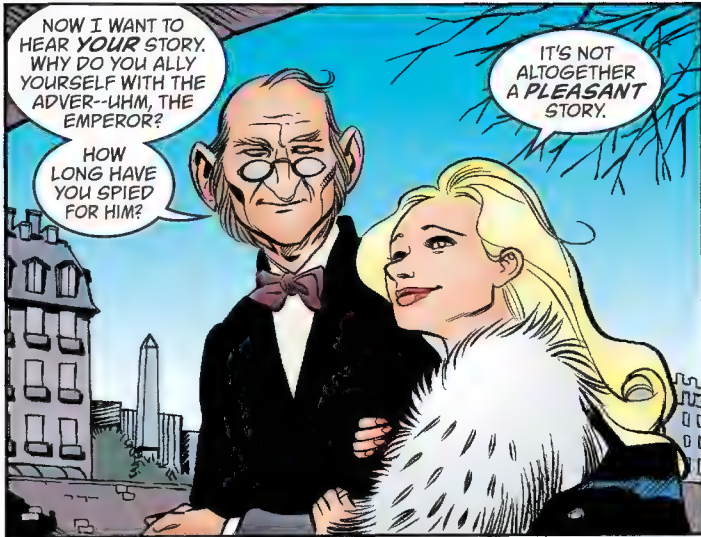




WHEN THE EMPEROR'S ARMIES COME, AND YOU TAKE OVER AGAIN, WE CAN TAKE SPECIAL PLEASURE IN PUTTING SOME THINGS TO RIGHT.

OH YES.

WE CAN PAY THAT **HUSSY** HER RIGHTFUL DUES-- IN A PUBLIC SQUARE, WITH A **NEW ROPE**.



NOW I WANT TO HEAR **YOUR** STORY. WHY DO YOU ALLY YOURSELF WITH THE ADVER--UHM, THE EMPEROR?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU SPIED FOR HIM?

IT'S NOT ALTOGETHER A **PLEASANT** STORY.

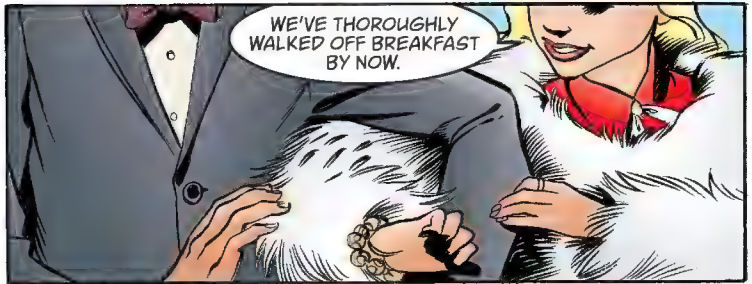


BUT I'VE BEEN WITH HIM ALL ALONG. SINCE BEFORE COMING TO THIS WORLD.



TELL ME. I WANT TO KNOW **EVERYTHING** ABOUT YOU.

ALL RIGHT. BUT NOT HERE.



WE'VE THOROUGHLY WALKED OFF BREAKFAST BY NOW.

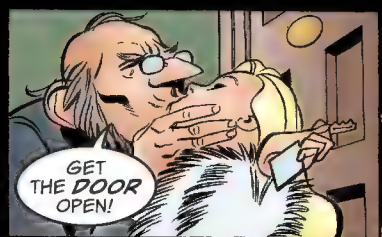


LET'S GO BACK TO MY ROOM--TO OUR **BED**-- WHERE YOU CAN **HOLD** ME WHILE I TELL YOU MY TALE.





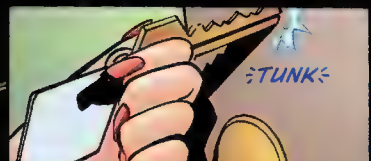
HURRY!



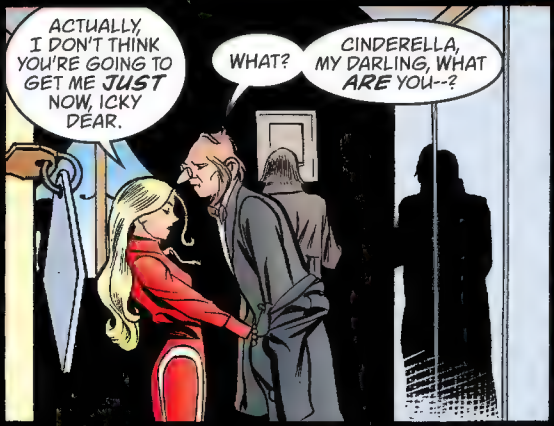
GET THE DOOR OPEN!



I NEED--



-I MUST HAVE YOU RIGHT NOW!



ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GET ME JUST NOW, ICKY DEAR.

WHAT?

CINDERELLA, MY DARLING, WHAT ARE YOU--?



I'M AFRAID THE ENGAGEMENT IS OFF, ICKY.

BOSS, MEET ICHABOD CRANE.



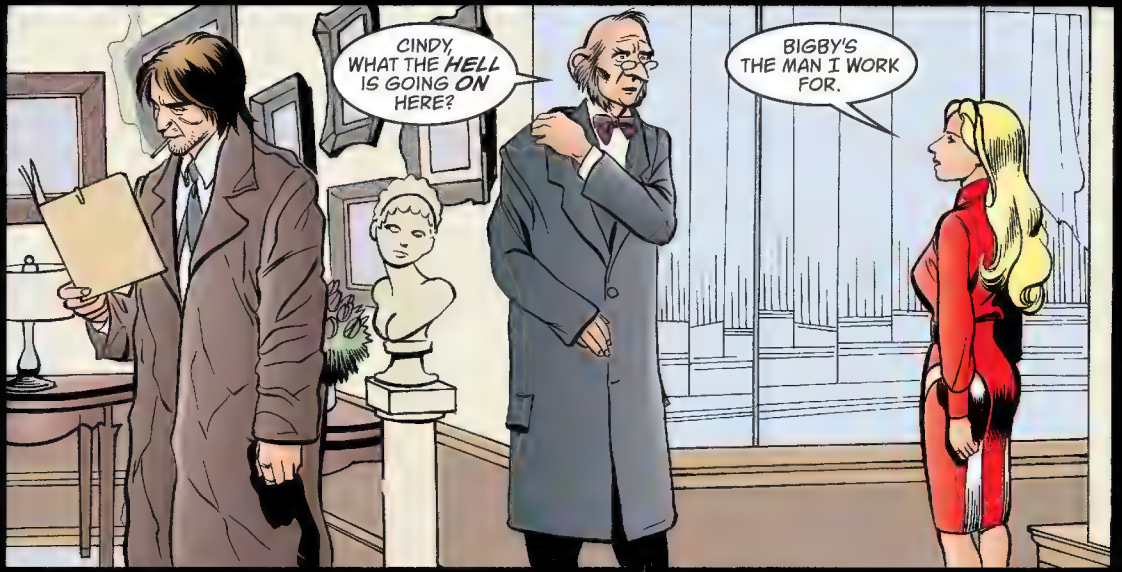
WE'VE MET.

I USED TO WORK FOR HIM, REMEMBER?

BIGBY? HERE? BUT--







CINDY  
WHAT THE HELL  
IS GOING ON  
HERE?

BIGBY'S  
THE MAN I WORK  
FOR.

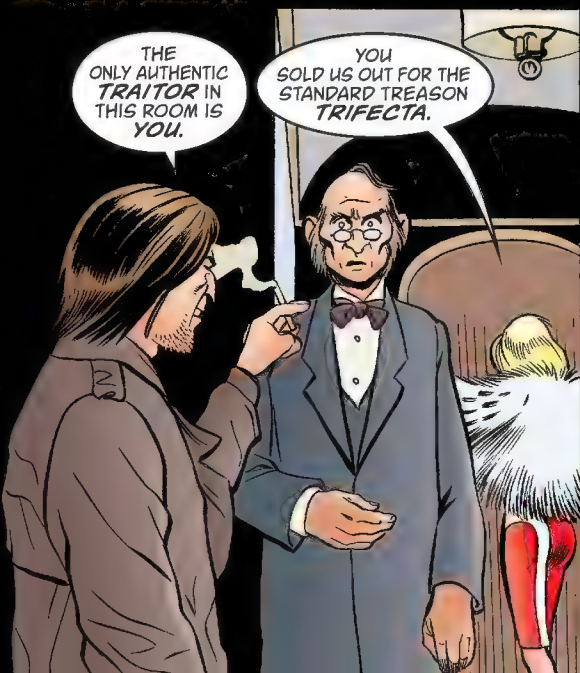


YOU?  
YOU'RE THE  
ADVERSARY?



DON'T BE AN IDIOT,  
CRANE. I'M EXACTLY  
WHO YOU'VE ALWAYS  
KNOWN ME TO  
BE.

I'M LOYAL TO  
FABLETOWN.  
CINDERELLA'S  
LOYAL TO  
FABLETOWN.



THE  
ONLY AUTHENTIC  
TRAITOR IN  
THIS ROOM IS  
YOU.

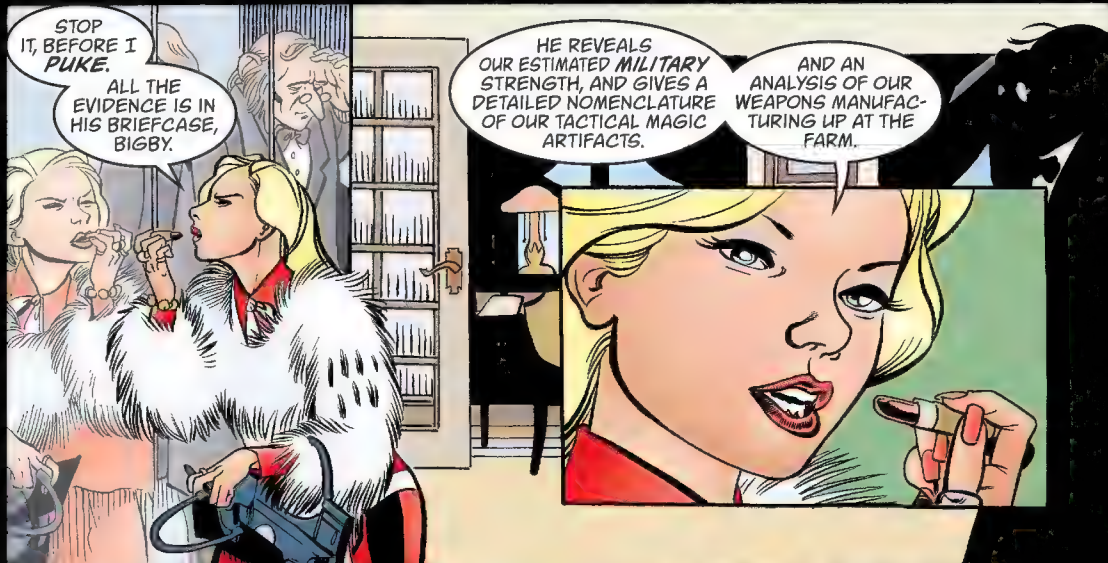
YOU  
SOLD US OUT FOR THE  
STANDARD TREASON  
TRIFECTA.



MONEY,  
SEX AND  
POWER.

BUT--  
--I LOVE  
YOU.



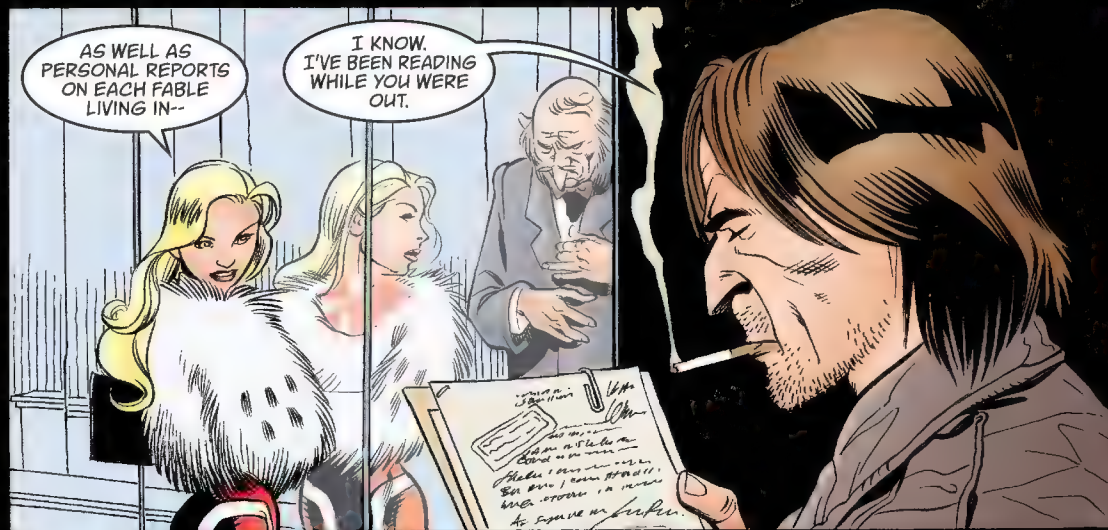


STOP IT, BEFORE I PUKE.

ALL THE EVIDENCE IS IN HIS BRIEFCASE, BIGBY.

HE REVEALS OUR ESTIMATED MILITARY STRENGTH, AND GIVES A DETAILED NOMENCLATURE OF OUR TACTICAL MAGIC ARTIFACTS.

AND AN ANALYSIS OF OUR WEAPONS MANUFACTURING UP AT THE FARM.



AS WELL AS PERSONAL REPORTS ON EACH FABLE LIVING IN--

I KNOW. I'VE BEEN READING WHILE YOU WERE OUT.

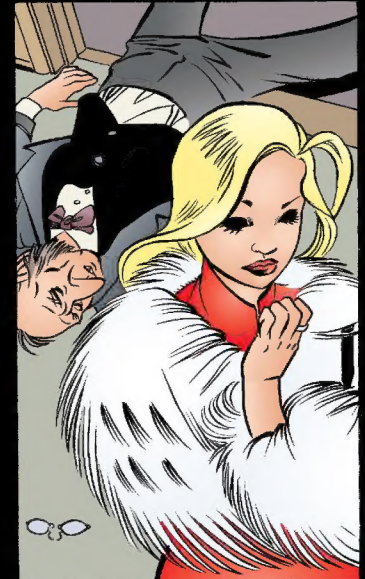
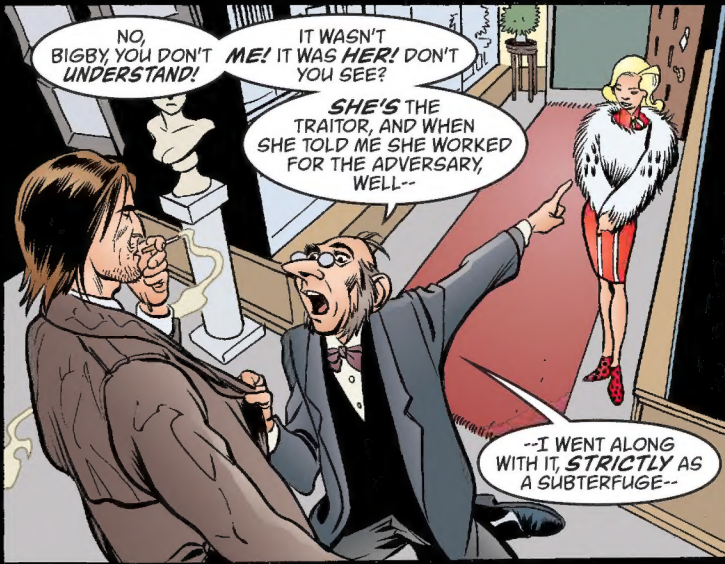


I ESPECIALLY ENJOYED WHAT HE HAD TO SAY ABOUT ME.

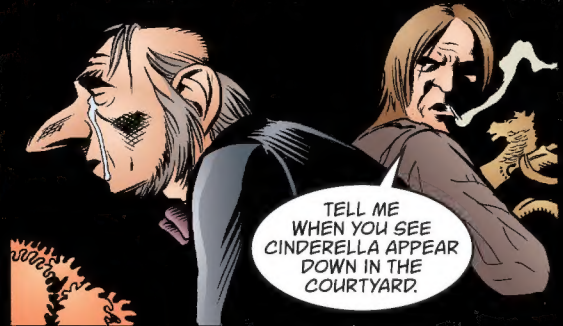
FOR A FORMER WRITING TEACHER, HE SURE FOUND NEW WAYS TO OVERUSE "MONGREL" AND "WHIPPED CUR" IN A SINGLE RUN-ON SENTENCE.

AND THEN THERE'S THIS EXTENDED RAPE-FANTASY ABOUT SNOW.







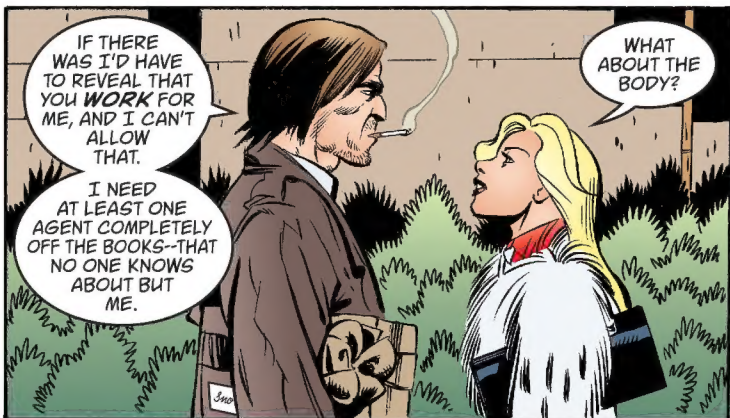






LET'S GO HOME. WE'RE ALL DONE HERE.

SO THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE A TRIAL?



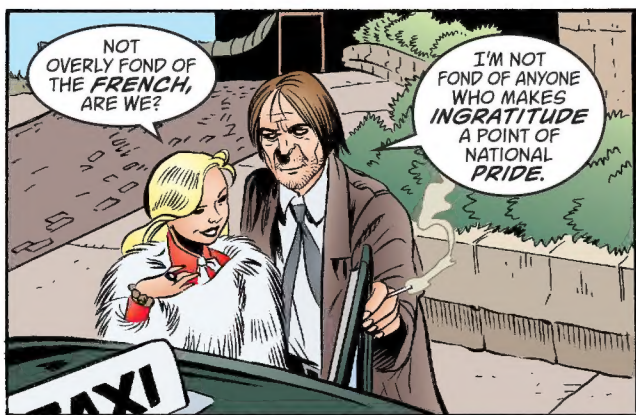
IF THERE WAS I'D HAVE TO REVEAL THAT YOU *WORK* FOR ME, AND I CAN'T ALLOW THAT.

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY?

I NEED AT LEAST ONE AGENT COMPLETELY OFF THE BOOKS--THAT NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT BUT ME.

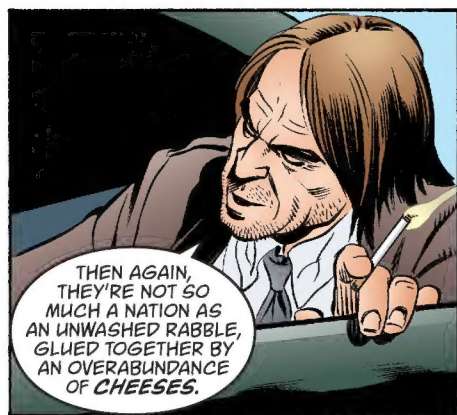


I MADE IT LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT--AT LEAST ENOUGH TO FOOL FRENCH COPS.



NOT OVERLY FOND OF THE FRENCH, ARE WE?

I'M NOT FOND OF ANYONE WHO MAKES *INGRATITUDE* A POINT OF NATIONAL PRIDE.



THEN AGAIN, THEY'RE NOT SO MUCH A NATION AS AN UNWASHED RABBLE, GLUED TOGETHER BY AN OVERABUNDANCE OF *CHEESES*.



THIS SOUNDS LIKE REHEARSED MATERIAL, BIGBY.

YOU'RE A GOOD CROWD. I'LL BE HERE ALL WEEK.



BE SURE TO TIP YOUR WAITRESS AND BE CAREFUL ON THE DRIVE HOME.





NATHAN